

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

OMB-01 EB-07 /070 W

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R 052219Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8233

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, PE

SUBJ: FORMER PRESIDENT BELAUNDE RETURNS

1. ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, FORMER PRESIDENT FERNANDO BELAUNDE RETURNED TO LIMA FOR A TWO-WEEK VISIT. HE WAS MET AT THE AIRPORT BY AROUND 3,000 ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTERS, MANY OF THEM SPORTING NEW T-SHIRTS WITH IMPRINTED IMAGE OF BELAUNDE. CROWD CHANTED ACCION POPULAR SLOGANS. PLACARDS CALLED FOR LIBERTY, ELECTIONS AND RESPECT FOR THE CONSTITUTION. THE GUARDIA CIVIL WAS OUT IN FORCE AT THE AIRPORT AND ALONG ACCESS ROADS, BUT THERE WAS NO HINT OF DISTURBANCE.

2. BELAUNDE SPOKE BRIEFLY TO THE CROWD, DECLARING THAT HE HAD RETURNED TO PERU "WITH OPEN ARMS" BUT THAT HE WAS PREPARED TO FIGHT "BAND PERUVIANS" IF THAT WAS THEIR DESIRE. HE CONGRATULATED THE GOP FOR ITS FRANKNESS ABOUT THE CRITICAL NATURE OF THE ECONOMY AND HE OFFERED HIS SUPPORT IN HELPING PERU OVERCOME ITS GRAVE PROBLEMS. BELAUNDE REFERRED TO SEVEN YEARS OF CONFUSION, FORTUNATELY BROUGHT TO AN END BY THE TACNA PRONUNCIAMIENTO (AUGUST 29 COUP) AND DECLARED THAT AN UNSTABLE AND QUESTIONABLE SENIORITY SYSTEM (MILGOV SELECTION PROCESS) CANNOT BE ENTRUSTED TO LEAD PERU INTO THE FUTURE. REGULARLY SCHEDULED ELECTIONS ARE THE ONLY SOLUTION

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FOR THE REPUBLIC, CONCLUDED BELAUNDE.

3. LABOR AND POLITICAL GROUPS, INCLUDING ACCION POPULAR SOCIALISTA WHICH CLAIMS TO BE LEGITIMATE HEIR OF AP PARTY AND ITS FORMER ELECTORATE AND WHICH "EXPELLED" BELAUNDE IN A 1969 CONGRESS, PROTESTED HIS RETURN. AIRPORT WORKERS HAD THREATENED 24-HOUR PROTEST STRIKE TO COINCIDE WITH BELAUNDE'S ARRIVAL, BUT JANUARY 4 AIRPORT OPERATIONS APPEARED NORMAL.

4. AIRPORT ATMOSPHERE WAS FESTIVE AND CROWD WAS GENUINELY ENTHUSIASTIC. BELAUNDE WAS GREETED AS RETURNING HERO AND CARRIED AWAY ON SHOULDERS OF FOLLOWERS. HOWEVER, POLITICAL IMPACT OF VISIT MAY BE MODEST. CROWD WAS CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN AP HAD HOPED (PARTY MADE ADVANCE BOAST THAT UP TO 50,000 WOULD ATTEND) AND IT WAS ALMOST ENTIRELY MIDDLE CLASS IN APPEARANCE. EMBOFF WHO WITNESSED CARAVAN THROUGH LIMA SUBURBS NOTED MOSTLY OWNER-DRIVEN AUTOMOBILES, ONLY ONE OR TWO BUSES CARRYING SUPPORTERS, AND NO TRUCKS. FORMER HIGH OFFICIAL IN BELAUNDE GOVERNMENT REMARKED TO ANOTHER EMBOFF THAT CROWD WAS "TOO WHITE" AND THEREFORE NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF CORSS-SECTION OF PERUVIAN ELECTORATE. LIMA PRESS GENERALLY BURIED BELAUNDE'S ARRIVAL ON INSIDE PAGES. SUNDAY RADIO AND TV NEWSCASTS IGNORED EVENT.

5. AGAINST ADVICE OF SOME OF HIS FOLLOWERS, BELAUNDE WILL BE STAYING AT HOME OF BROTHER-IN-LAW IN FAR LIMA SUBURB; THEREFORE FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS OF SUPPORT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE. BELAUNDE MAY NOT PLAN ANY. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FROM AP SOURCE THAT PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ PASSED MESSAGE TO HIM ASKING THAT HE REFRAIN FROM POLITICAL ACTIVITY DURING THIS VISIT.  
DEAN

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